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ABSTRACT

The study measures individual differences in attitude toward student activism on an 18-item Likert type scale. A validity comparison of a known extreme group with a sample from the general student population yielded a significant difference between the means of the groups. Construct validity was evaluated by first testing the differences between pro- and anti-activists on the Rokeach values scales and then examining the relationships between self value rankings of pro- and anti-activists and their perceptions of the rankings of student activists. Significant differences between the groups on self rankings were evidenced on a number of values known to differentiate activists from non-activists. Correlational data supported predictions that pro-activists would show positive relationships between their own values and those they perceived activists holding. Anti-activists showed zero correlations between self and perceived value rankings which may have been due to lack of an extreme-activist group from the college population. The author suggests that securing such a group might lead to even larger differences between ranking as well as to strong negative correlations. References and tables are included. (Author/SES)

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MEASUREMENT OF THE CONSTRUCT OF ATTITUDE TOWARD STUDENT ACTIVISM[1]

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The construct of student activism has been investigated by a number of authors (Flacks, 1967; Kenniston, 1968; Sheehan, 1970). Although their studies have dealt with the attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of actual activists, they have not touched upon the broader topic of general student attitudes toward activists. It would seem that a continuum of attitudes toward activism exists and that individuals falling at the extremes should show differences in basic attitudinal and value orientation.

Knowledge of these individual differences in orientation toward activism may prove valuable in understanding typical student reaction to the pressing social problems of our times and their willingness or lack of willingness to lend support to their more radical counterparts. Accordingly, the present study outlines an attempt to develop a scale to reliably and validly measure attitudes toward student activism and to examine the construct tapped by that scale.

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Construction of the Student Activism Scale

Eighty items concerning various aspects of student activism were collected from statements in current periodicals and newspapers as well as from individual graduate students and faculty. Both favorable and unfavorable statements about student activists were employed in a five response category Likert format from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with a high score on the total scale representing a favorable attitude toward student activism.

These items were then administered to 121 students enrolled in undergraduate courses in social and adolescent psychology at the University of Maine, and item analyses performed by determining the correlation of each item with the total score. The correlation employed was a discrimination index calculated upon the upper and lower 27% of the distribution (N=66), which approximates the biserial correlation coefficient (Guilford, 1954, p. 428). Items with indices above .55 were retained.

Development of Equivalent Forms and Reliability Data

Since the scale was designed primarily as a research tool for assessing pre- and post-experimental attitudes (Gold, Ryckman, & Rodda, 1972; Ryckman, Rodda, & Sherman, 1972), the development of equivalent forms was necessitated in order to minimize testing effects. The composition of each form included five favorable and 13 unfavorable items which were matched across forms on the basis of full scale item total score correlations. Discrimination indices ranged between .55 and .84 on Form A and between .55 and .82 on Form B. Two extreme items were also included within the 13 negative items on each form in order to ensure that a range of attitudes was being tapped. Extreme items were defined as those which were endorsed by only those subjects from the high total score group with very high scores and no subjects with low total scores. The items, along with their respective discrimination indices, are presented in Table I. An equivalent forms correlation coefficient which was calculated employing the upper and lower 27% of the distribution showed very strong parallel forms reliability. (r=.93).

Since the scale was intended for use with extreme groups, a t test on the equivalency of the means of the two forms was calculated for both the high and low total score groups. No significant differences were found between the means of the two forms. Means and standard deviations are reported in Table 2.

As a further check upon the interform reliability, data was collected from three undergraduate classes using the following procedures: a) the two forms of the scale were combined and administered to 62 subjects in an undergraduate Social Psychology class, b) a second section of Social Psychology (N=68) was given Form A followed by Form B one week later; and c) a Child Psychology class (N=40) was administered Form B and then Form A with an interform duration of one week.

The between form correlation coefficients were r = .87, combined forms, r = .80, A-B and r = .76, B-A. Pooling of the data from the three conditions yielded an r = .81. The slightly lower correlation for the B-A administration may have been due to the fact that some students had been exposed to the scale in earlier classes. It should be emphasized that these coefficients were calculated upon unselected samples; i.e., they were not composed of extreme scorers only, as were the original reliability samples. Means and standard deviations from the three samples are reported in Table 3. It is interesting to note that the means for these samples were quite close to those calculated upon the upper 27% of the distribution in the first reliability check. In other words, the means for these unselected samples were as high as those from a sample selected from only the upper end of the distribution. The explanation may lie in the time differences between the two samplings; that is, the data from the unselected groups were obtained two years after the data from the first sample. In those two years, the issue of student activism had become salient on this campus through nationwide events and through local occurrences, and a general upward surge of pro-activist attitudes may have resulted.

Known Groups Validation

A number of approaches were utilized in attempting to validate the scale. The first basic task was to discover whether a group identified as having an extreme activist orientation could be differentiated from unselected individuals. In order to assess this possibility, an attempt was made to solicit responses to the scale from the Mamie L. Bilodeaux Socialist Group, a group concerned with building international socialism, and the campus Women's Liberation organization. Members of the Bilodeaux society refused to cooperate, so only responses from the Women's Liberation group were utilized.

Method

Subjects

Fifteen members of a women's liberation organization and 62 students from an undergraduate social psychology course at the University of Maine were used for this validation. The 62 unselected students were those who had been employed in the earlier parallel forms reliability study.

Procedure

The combined forms of the Student activism scale were administered to the 62 social psychology students as previously described in the reliability section of the present paper. The cooperation of a known leader in the Women's Liberation group was secured and distribution of the forms to the members was handled through her.

Results

In order to test for the significance of the difference between the means, homogeneity of variance was checked and showed the group variances to be non-homogeneous ($F=2.17$, $df=14/61$, $p<.05$). Since this was the case, a t test

between the means was calculated and the result evaluated against a more stringent value (Downey and Heath, 1970, p. 184). This procedure yielded a significant result ($t=3.95$) $df=14/61$, $p<.01$).

Discussion

This validation attempt, utilizing a group identified as proactivist, was successful in that members of this group were shown to respond in a significantly different manner from an unselected group. Since the scale was designed primarily as a research tool to identify a salient political attitude, this first step in attaining discriminability was considered essential.

Construct Validation

The second attempt at validation concerned the construct of attitude toward student activism.

Experiment I

Introduction

Studies dealing with the beliefs, goals, and chosen careers of activists and nonactivists have uncovered differences between these groups. For example, Flacks (1967) found that themes of protest seemed consistently to be imbued with romanticism as expressed in positively valuing such concepts as "leading a free life" and the rejection of the scientific and rational for the affective and experiential. Anti-authoritarianism, anti-dogmatism, antipathy to self-interested behavior, anti-institutionalism, a desire for human relationships and a pro-populist attitude were also themes found in protest literature. In comparing activists with non-activists, non-activists were found to show conventional orientations toward achievement, material

success, and sexual morality while activists were concerned with intellectual and aesthetic pursuits, humanitarian issues, and self expression.

Kenniston's (1968) extensive writings on student activists show high congruence with the findings of Flacks. His findings indicate that activists score high and nonactivists low on values of romanticism which he equated with sensitivity to art, beauty, concern with ideas, and humanitarianism, and that activists score low and nonactivists high on values of moralism and concern about controlling personal impulses. He states that in general, activists reject careerest and familist goals and adopt those identified with humanitarian and self actualizing values.

It seems reasonable to assume that, if the S.A. Scale has construct validity it should be powerful enough to differentiate those who hold favorable attitudes toward student activists from nonfavorable individuals on important value dimensions. Rokeach (1968) has posited a theoretical system of instrumental and terminal values and developed scales, each consisting of 18 values which are to be rank-ordered by the subject to assess aspects of both types. Thus, differences between the average ranks of pro- and anti-student activists were expected on a number of these values. In accordance with previous findings, it was hypothesized that pro-activists would be significantly higher than anti-activists on values which seem to be highly identified with conventional concepts such as security, self esteem, achievement and deportment while scoring lower on values concerned with aesthetics, self-actualization, and humanitarianism.

Method

Subjects and Measurement Instruments

Three hundred and thirteen students enrolled in introductory, social,

and child psychology classes at the University of Maine were administered the Rokeach value scales (instrumental and terminal) along with Form A of the student activism scale.

Procedure

Scores of the total sample on the S.A. scale ranged from 26 to 88 with a mean of 60.24 and standard deviation of 12.26. The lower 25.6% (N=80) and upper 25.2% (N=79) of the distribution were selected for comparison of value rankings on the Rokeach instruments. The lower subgroups consisted of scores of 52 or below ($\bar{X}$=44.28, s=4.65) while the upper subgroups held scores of 68 or higher $\bar{X}$ =76.04, s=3.20). A *t* test between the means of the two groups showed them to be significantly different on the S.A. Scale (t=49.63, df=157, p<.001).

Results

The groups were divided into males and females and the data subjected to 2 X 2 factorial analyses of variance for each value. The mean ranks for the pro- and anti-activist groups on each value are presented in Tables 4 and 5. It can be seen that the more conventional terminal values such as family security, national security, sense of accomplishment and social recognition were significantly (p<.001) more strongly endorsed by the students with anti-activism orientations.

A significant interaction between sex and activism was also found for the value of national security. While anti-activist Ss of both sexes rated this value more strongly than pro-activists of either sex, pro-activist females rated the value higher than pro-activist males and anti-activist males rated it higher than anti-activist females. The value of world of beauty also exhibited a sex by activism interaction with females

in both the pro- and anti-activist group ranking the value more strongly than their male counterparts. The value of salvation which indicates a trusting in a divinity is also ranked higher on the value hierarchy by the anti-activists. Those terminal values such as world of beauty and world of peace ($p<.001$) and equality ($p<.01$) are favored more strongly by the pro-activists. Other differences, although non-significant, show trends in the predicted direction, e.g., freedom and inner harmony, being related to humanitarianism and self-actualization, are endorsed more strongly by the pro-activists.

The instrumental values show further support for the predictions. The values clean, obedient, and polite, show preference by anti-activists ($p<.001$) as do ambitious and responsible ($p<.05$) while the values broad-minded, imaginative, independent and intellectual are endorsed by pro-activists ($p<.05$). Another difference that shows the expected direction although non-significant, is self-control which is less strongly valued by the pro-activists.

Discussion

In general, the findings support the main hypothesis. Pro-activists scored significantly higher on those values which seem related to more abstract, aesthetic, and humanitarian concepts, while the anti-activists more strongly endorsed conventional or establishment related values. These findings are in accordance with those of Kenniston and Flacks and indicate that not only do students who are activist differ in fundamental value orientation from non-activists, but that students who endorse favorable positions toward student activists, even though they may not be activists

themselves, also hold values divergent from their anti-activist counterparts.

Experiment II

Introduction

A second question which arose in describing the construct of student activism dealt with the manner in which pro- and anti-activists perceive student activists. It would be expected that since pro-activists hold values congruent with those activists have been found to hold, that their perceived and self value hierarchies would be highly correlated, while those which the anti-activists hold and those which they perceive activists holding would show low to negative correlations.

Method

Form A of the student activism scale, along with two sets of the Rokeach instrument, was administered to a total of 163 students from two child psychology classes and a social psychology class. After filling out the activism scale, the subjects filled out one Rokeach instrument according to the usual instructions and the second as they felt "the majority of student activists would." The total sample was then differentiated on the basis of their activism scale scores into favorable (upper 25%; scores of 73 and above) and unfavorable (lower 22%; scores of 57 and below) groups. The lower group (N=36) consisted of 10 males and 26 females; the upper group (N=42) was composed of 8 males and 34 females.

Two statistical approaches were then used to analyze these data. First, a 2 X 2 analysis of variance with unequal groups was computed. Second, rank-order correlations were computed between each subject's actual and

perceived rankings, on both value scales, and then averaged for each group.

Results and Discussion

The results of the analyses of variance are given in Tables 6 and 7. A general agreement seems to exist between pro- and anti-student activists in their perceptions of the value rankings of student activists. Within the perceived rankings of terminal values, four show significant differences between pro- and anti-activists and of the four only social recognition was a value which differentiated between the groups on self rankings. Thus, both pro- and anti-activists, while differeing on a large number of terminal values, perceive these same values as holding quite similar positions in the value hierarchies of student activists.

In terms of the perceived instrumental values, six values exhibited differences between pro- and anti-activists, with five of the six appearing on values which differentiated the groups on self rankings. It may be that differences in the perceptions of the groups occur on these same values because these instrumental values such as obedience, polite, responsible and broadminded relate more strongly to concrete behavioral characteristics as opposed to the terminal values such as exciting life, inner harmony, national security, and world of beauty which are more abstract conceptually. The self value systems of pro- and anti-student activists may obscure perceptions on those values whose behavioral manifestations are more obvious.

A second approach to the perceived value differences entailed the examination of the relationship between perceived and self value rankings through Spearman rank-order correlation coefficients. The expectation that positive correlations would exist for pro- and negative correlations for

anti-student activists was confirmed. Average correlations were computed utilizing Fisher's "Z" transformation (McNemar, 1969) for pro- and anti-activists for both instrumental and terminal values and are found in Tables 8 and 9. The average correlations for the pro-activists (.51 and .42) are both significant at the .01 level, whereas the average correlations for the anti-activists are near zero (.00 and .04). Differences between the average rho's of the two groups for both instrumental and terminal values are significant at the .001 level (McNemar, 1969). Thus, the two groups differ in terms of the correspondence between their own value hierarchies and the perceived hierarchies of student activists.

It should be noted that the anti-activist group showed zero rather than negative average correlations between perceived and self rankings indicating that as a group they do not hold values which are totally antithetical to those activists are perceived as holding. It may be that in a college population, the difficulty of securing rabidly anti-activist attitudes produces the low relationships between perceived and self value systems evidenced in this study. Even where significant differences were found in Experiment I between self rankings and in the present experiment between perceived value rankings, those differences were not of extensive magnitude. In brief, the values were not generally ranked at opposite ends of the hierarchy by the two groups. Securing groups with more extreme anti-activist attitudes may lead to even larger differences and also to strong negative correlations.

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Footnotes

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2. The authors wish to express their sincere thanks to Darnell Starbird for his assistance in developing items for the scale. An abbreviated version of this paper was presented at the meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Boston, April, 1972.

Table 1

Item Correlations with Total Scale Scores of Forms

A and B of the Student Activism Scale

FORM A

		Correlation
1.	The peace movement on campus today is concerned with the betterment of human living.	.70
2.	Universities should cut off financial aid to students who demonstrate.	.75
3.	Radical students are usually slovenly in their dress.	.65
4.	Student activists are justified in occupying campus buildings in order to have their grievances heard.	.73
5.	Many student protesters are hostile even to their own classmates.	.58
6.	College students who interfere with the functioning of the University should be denied State and Federal financial scholarships.	.79
7.	Student protesters are socially more mature andpolitically more sophisticated than university administrators think they are.	.82
8.	Students demonstrating against the war in Vietnam are basically cowards.	.62
9.	Students demonstrating against the war in Vietnam are basically misguided idealists.	.77
10.	Mature college students don't become involved in student protest.	.72
11.	Student activists are not aware of the harsh truths and realities of life.	.60
12.	The universities against which activists are rebelling have really treated them pretty well.	.60
13.	Student radicals lack discipline, purpose and values.	.70
14.	Draft protesters react mostly out of selfish fear for their lives.	.67
15.	Students who protest to get attention are much like children showing off.	.68
16.	Students demonstrating against the war in Vietnam are basically humanists.	.55
17.	Student protesters do not offer any solutions to our problems.	.76
18.	The evils of our society are such that truly aware students have no choice but to protest.	.69

FORM B

		Correlation
1.	The F.B.I. should be investigating student demonstrators.	.76
2.	University administrations should give student protesters a part in the policy making of the University.	.72
3.	Student activists who engage in civil disobedience should not be allowed to continue their studies at the universities.	.78
4.	The social injustices which activists protest are mostly exaggerations of fact.	.73
5.	New left activists are working for the downfall of the American way of life.	.60
6.	Students who protest by occupying campus buildings should be expelled from the university.	.70
7.	Student protest groups should be watched by the F.B.I.	.71
8.	Student demonstrators should be rewarded for the interest in the university.	.69
9.	Most student demonstrators are either very dangerous or very naive.	.66
10.	Student activists are unwilling to assume responsibility for their own behaviors.	.60
11.	The students who occupied Columbia University buildings should have been thrown out of College.	.84
12.	Violence on campus is justified by the existence of social evils.	.60
13.	Student protesters should be ashamed of the way in which they disregard the American tradition.	.68
14.	Student demonstrators are emotional and irrational in nature.	.62
15.	Student unrest is a legitimate and rational effort to deal with the circumstances in America today.	.83
16.	The "New Left" is concerned with building a better society.	.75
17.	Most students who protest the war in Vietnam would readily overthrow the U.S. Government if they were given the chance.	.55
18.	In view of student demonstrations, it would be dangerous to give the vote to 18 year olds.	.65

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of the Upper and Lower 27% on the Student Activism Scale

Form	Upper 27%			Lower 27%		
	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
A	33	64.6	5.9	33	37.4	4.6
B	33	66.3	5.7	33	38.7	5.7

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Forms A and B of the Student Activism Scale for Three Samples

		Form A		Form B	
Sample	N	$\underline{X}$	SD	$\overline{X}$	SD
Combined	62	65.6	10.0	67.7	10.7
A - B	68	65.2	11.0	66.7	12.0
B - A	40	64.7	11.0	65.6	8.6

Table 4

Mean Rankings of Instrumental Values for 79 College Students with Pro-activism Attitudes and 80 Students with Anti-activism Attitudes

	Pro-	Anti-
*Ambitious	12.09	10.69
***Broadminded	5.87	7.93
Capable	8.90	8.25
Cheerful	9.32	9.49
***Clean	13.99	11.36
Courageous	13.13	12.39
Forgiving	6.71	8.51
Helpful	7.73	8.33
Honest	4.53	4.04
***Imaginative	9.52	11.80
***Independent	6.13	9.89
*Intellectual	9.94	11.49
Logical	10.43	10.45
*Loving	4.68	6.70
***Obedient	16.91	14.88
***Polite	14.35	11.73
*Responsible	7.13	5.90
Self-control	9.51	7.94

* $p<.05$
** $p<.01$
*** $p<.001$

Table 5

Mean Rankings of Terminal Values for 79 College Students with pro-activism attitudes and 80 Students with Anti-activism Attitudes

	Pro-	Anti-
An exciting life	13.49	13.03
Comfortable life	12.25	11.14
**Equality	8.35	10.30
***Family security	10.96	7.70
Freedom	5.62	6.28
Happiness	5.09	4.51
Inner harmony	6.00	6.48
Mature love	5.78	6.78
***National security	14.47	11.95
Pleasure	12.06	11.70
*Salvation	14.62	13.05
Self-respect	6.08	6.24
***Sense of accomplishment	10.48	8.28
***Social recognition	16.08	14.26
True friendship	6.22	7.10
*Wisdom	9.52	10.78
***World of beauty	10.35	12.51
***World of peace	6.06	8.75

* $p<.05$
** $p<.01$
*** $p<.001$

Table 6

Mean Perceived Rankings of Instrumental Values of Student Activists by Students with Pro- and Anti-activism Attitudes

	Perceptions	
	Pro-	Anti-
Ambitious	6.55	4.94
*Broadminded	5.71	8.92
Capable	7.00	7.75
*Cheerful	13.17	10.97
Clean	15.26	14.97
Courageous	6.02	6.39
Forgiving	11.86	11.47
Helpful	8.69	8.83
Honest	7.12	8.05
*Imaginative	8.55	6.11
Independent	3.36	3.03
Intellectual	7.57	6.86
Logical	7.86	9.78
Loving	9.02	8.44
**Obedient	17.02	15.64
**Polite	15.79	14.47
***Responsible	8.14	11.56
Self-control	12.40	12.72

* $p<.05$
** $p<.01$
*** $p<.001$

Table 7

Mean Perceived Rankings of Terminal Values of Student Activists by Students with Pro- and Anti-activism Attitudes

	Perceptions	
	Pro-	Anti-
An exciting life	11.83	8.81
Comfortable life	14.26	13.11
Equality	4.19	5.06
Family security	14.10	14.83
Freedom	3.38	4.03
Happiness	8.76	7.33
Inner harmony	7.60	9.14
*Mature love	9.33	11.94
National security	11.64	10.56
**Pleasure	12.93	9.42
Salvation	13.98	13.44
**Self-respect	8.88	12.17
Sense of accomplishment	7.95	7.64
**Social recognition	11.74	7.78
True friendship	10.17	11.44
Wisdom	11.10	11.97
World of beauty	6.36	7.78
World of peace	2.74	4.53

*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$